



Patricia “Patti” Grace Smith

Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation

Patricia Grace Smith serves as Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation within the Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), providing leadership to the office responsible for licensing, regulating, and promoting the U.S. commercial space transportation industry.

During her career at DOT and FAA, the U.S. commercial launch industry has experienced significant growth and change: technological and infrastructure developments such as commercial spaceports; reusable launch vehicle technology and ocean-based launch platforms; as well as significant U.S. and international market growth and increased international partnerships. She also initiated and fostered greater cooperation and partnerships between aviation and space functions in the agency.

Ms. Smith’s work has contributed significantly to help FAA keep pace with the rapid changes affecting the industry. She has worked extensively to develop new and updated licensing and insurance regulations for commercial launch operations, as well as working to ensure that the industry remains a leader in an increasingly competitive worldwide market. In 2004, Ms. Smith led the office of Commercial Space Transportation to issue the first licenses for manned suborbital reusable launch vehicle flights, marking the opening of several potential new markets for commercial space flight. She also continued to promote the development of this emerging industry through partnerships with national and industry space organizations, such as the Aerospace States Association and the X Prize Foundation.

Ms. Smith began her career at the Department of Transportation (DOT), Office of Commercial Space Transportation (OCST) in November 1994, as Associate Managing Director. In 1995, she became OCST’s Chief of Staff. In November 1995, OCST was transferred from DOT’s Office of the Secretary to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as an additional FAA line of business. With this transfer, Ms. Smith was named Deputy Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation (AST), joining the ranks of FAA’s Senior Executive Service. In February 1997, Ms. Smith was named Acting Associate

Administrator for AST; in June 1998, Ms. Smith was named FAA Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation.

From 1980 to 1994, Ms. Smith held important leadership positions within the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). She first served as Chief of FCC's Consumer Assistance and Small Business Office, Office of Public Affairs and later as Deputy Director for Policy, Office of the Managing Director. In addition to her principle responsibilities, Ms. Smith worked on several major initiatives on behalf of the agency, among them as executive committee team member for the FCC Spectrum Auctions Implementation Team that produced the very first and largest auction of U.S. assets in history. Ms. Smith, along with her team members, received Vice President Gore's Hammer Award.

Ms. Smith also held positions at the Department of Defense, Defense Communications Agency, Acquisition Policy Office, where she produced two major staff studies on the Department's contracting activities, and at the Senate Commerce Committee where she produced an economic study in support of a major piece of legislation.

Prior to joining the government, Ms. Smith received her B.A. degree from Tuskegee University and did graduate work at Auburn University, George Washington University, and Harvard University School of Business. In 1996, she was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from her undergraduate alma mater. She is the recipient of numerous other awards and has served on several boards.